

Robert Dudley, MD, MEd, FAAP
Community Health Center, Inc
85 Lafayette Street
New Britain, CT 06051
(860)224-3642

RE: RB 299, An Act Concerning the Adoption of Regulations to Establish Minimum Standards for School Based Health Centers

Dear Senator Gerrata, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Dr. Robert Dudley and I am medical director for school based health services for Community Health Center, Inc. I also serve as co-chair for DPH's Advisory Committee on School Based Health Centers and as Vice President of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I am testifying today in support of RB 299, An Act Concerning the Adoption of Regulations to Establish Minimum Standards for School Based Health Centers. The language in this bill simply states that the Department of Public Health shall adopt regulations to establish minimum quality standards, rather than 'may adopt regulations'.

School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) provide primary care medical services, behavioral health services, and in some sites dental services to children in preK - grade 12 settings. School Based Health Centers address a wide range of health issues that impact a child's ability to learn and succeed in school. SBHCs provide a core social service with proven results. Children, families, schools, and communities all benefit from this essential health service.

The Department of Public Health provides funding for 96 SBHC sites. The vast majority of these sites offer comprehensive care that include medical and behavioral health services. The minimum standards as described in this bill will ensure that all sites meet quality standards, provide a core level of consistent services from site to site, meet state and federal regulations, meet facility requirements, and are sponsored by a licensed entity. Organizations that can meet the criteria of the SBHC definition and the minimum standards can assure parents, schools, and health care partners that they are providing the highest quality care possible to children and adolescents that use the services.

I see the wonderful work school based health centers do every day as nurse practitioners, therapists, and dental hygienists in the four school based health centers in New Britain help to keep students healthy, engaged, and in class. Often these providers bridge the educational and healthcare world in ways that I could never manage. The standards included in this bill will help assure quality at all SBHCs across the state by creating minimum quality standards that have broad support in the school based health center community.

The legislatively-mandated School Based Health Center Advisory Committee, with representation from state agencies, SBHC organizations, the CT Association of School Based Health Centers, school nursing, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, worked on the development of these minimum quality standards for ten months. The standards reflect the input and broad consensus from all of the partners and will provide a framework to guide both new and existing School Based Health Centers. I support the language as set forth in RB 299 and urge you to adopt this bill to ensure the highest standards for Connecticut School Based Health Centers.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Dudley, MD, MEd, FAAP